

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LIMA 11129 272347Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 CPR-01 PRS-01 PA-01 USIA-06 /058 W

-----019053 272352Z /72

P R 272310Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8051

INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY QUITO

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 11129

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PE

SUBJ: FORMER PRESIDENT VELASCO'S FUNERAL

REF: LIMA 11090

SUMMARY: EX-PRESIDENT VELASCO BURIED DEC 26 FOLLOWING CATHEDRAL AND GRAVESIDE CEREMONIES WHICH ATTRACTED SIZEABLE, LARGELY LEFTIST, CROWDS. PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ DID NOT ATTEND, POSSIBLY AT REQUEST OF FAMILY. PRIME MINISTER ARBULU GAVE GOP STATEMENT INSTEAD. OTHER EULOGIES AND GENERAL ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING VELASCO'S BURIAL CARRIED ANTI-MORALES BERMUDEZ TINGE, PERHAPS A RESULT OF MEMORIES OF THE "UNFINISHED REVOLUTION" AND THE MORE HOPEFUL DAYS OF THE PAST THAT HIS DESMISE HAS PROVOKED. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHAT IMPACT VELASCO'S DEPARTURE WILL HAVE ON THE FORTHCOMING POLITICAL PROCESS. END SUMMARY.

1. EX-PRESIDENT JUAN VELASCO ALVARADO WAS BURIED WITH FULL PRESIDENTIAL HONORS ON DECEMBER 26 WHICH GOP DECLARED A NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING AND LABOR FREE FOR WORKERS OF LIMA-CALLAO. CEREMONIES BEGAN IN THE MORNING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LIMA 11129 272347Z

WITH A MEMORIAL MASS IN LIMA'S CATHEDRAL PRESIDED OVER BY THE CARDINAL AND ATTENDED BY THE FAMILY, THE MILITARY JUNTA, THE CABINET AND DIPLOMATIC CHIEFS OF MISSION. PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ WAS NOTABLY ABSENT.

2. VERY LARGE CROWDS WAITING IN FRONT OF THE CATHEDRAL IN PLAZA DE ARMAS (ESTIMATED BY PRESS FROM 50 TO 250

THOUSAND, THE LATTER FIGURE FAR TOO HIGH) INCLUDED MANY LEFTIST LABOR AND CAMPESINO GROUPS AND THERE WERE DERISIVE SHOUTS AT THE MILITARY JUNTA MEMBERS, NONETHELESS, HUGE PROCESSION TO CEMETERY PROCEEDED PEACEFULLY ALTHOUGH SLOWLY (5 KMS IN 5 HOURS). CROWD WON VELASCO FAMILY'S APPROVAL TO REMOVE CASKET FROM HEARSE AND CARRY IT ALL THE WAY TO THE CEMETRERY.

3. PRIME MINISTER-MINISTER OF WAR ARBULU DELIVERED A RELATIVELY BRIEF AND RESTRAINED EULOGY ON BEHALF OF THE GOP AT THE GRAVESIDE, REVIEWING VELASCO'S MILITARY CAREER, RECOGNIZING HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE COUNTRY AND CONCLUDING WITH THE ASSERTION THAT "THE HISTORY OF THE GREAT REFORMS OF 20TH CENTURY PERU CANNOT BE SPEARATED FROM THE NAME OF GENERAL VELASCO". THE EXAAPRESIDENT'S FORMER TRANSPORT MINISTER AND CHIEF OF STAFF, RETIRED GENRAL ANIBAL MEZA CUADRA, DELIVERED A LENGTHY AND EMOTIONAL EULOGY ON BEHALF OF THE VELASCO FAMILY IN WHICH HE LISTED PURPORTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE FIRST PHASE AND SEVERAL TIMES CITED THE "INCOMPREHENSION OF VELASCO'S DETRACTORS". MEZA CUADRA GAVE AMONG HIS VITUES "HIS GREATNESS FOR WHAT HE SAID AND, EVEN MORE, FOR WHAT HE DID NOT SAY SO AS NOT TO HURT PERU." AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO VELASCO'S REFUSAL TO PUBLICLY CRITICIZE THE MORALES BERMUDEZ REGIME AFTER HIS REMOVAL FROM OFFICE. CEREMONY WAS COMPLETED WITH BURIAL AT 4:15 P.M.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LIMA 11129 272347Z

4. COMMENT: THE ATMOSPHERE SURROUNDING THE BURIAL CEREMONIES HAD A STRONG ANTI-MORALES BERMUDEZ TINGE. THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESIDENT WAS, OF COURSE, OBVIOUS. REPORTEDLY THE VELASCO FAMILY REQUESTED THAT HE STAY AWAY. IT WAS PROBABLY JUST AS WELL THAT HE DID, GIVEN THE HOSTILITY SHOWN BY THE CROWDS TO THE ATTENDING JUNTA MEMBERS. THE COMMUNISTS AND EXTREME LEFT SEEMED TO BE THE MAJOR ORGAINZED PARTICIPANTS IN THE FUNERAL ENTOURAGE, ALTHOUGH MANY ORDINARY PERUVIANS, PERHAPS REMEMBERING MORE HOPEFUL TIMES UNDER VELASCO, ALSO JOINED THE CROWDS. INDEED, A TOUCH OF NOSTIALGIA FOR THE VELASCO DAYS WAS EVEN EVIDENT IN THE EDITORIALS OF EULOGY IN THE GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED PRESS. DESPITE THE LEFTIST ORIENTATION OF MANY PARTICIPANTS, THERE WERE NO INDICATIONS OF OVERT ANTI-U.S. ATTITUDES.

5. REACTION IN POLITICAL CIRCLES HAS BEEN GENERALLY ALONG IDOLOGICAL LINES LDEADERS OF LEFTIST POLITICAL PARTIES AND LABOR ANDCAMPESIONO GROUPS HAVE ALREADY ISSUED STATEMENTS OF PRAISE FOR VELASCO; BELAUNDE'S AP HAS BEEN SILENT THUS FAR. LOCAL APRA LEADERS HAVE NOT YET OFFERED THEIR THOUGHTS, BUT WIRE SERVICE REPORTS FROM CARACAS STATE THAT HAYA DE LA TORRE TERMED VELASCO'S

PASSING "THE END OF A GREAT EPISODE IN THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF PERU." HAYA, WHILE IMPLICITLY CRITICAL OF THE VELASCO GOVERNMENT, ALSO STATED THAT HIS ANALYTICAL JUDGMENT ON THE VELASCO PERIOD WOULD AWAIT HIS RETURN TO PERU IN EARLY JANUARY.

6. IT IS TOO EARLY TO STATE PRECISELY WHAT LASTING EFFECT, IF ANY, BELASCO'S PASSING WILL HAVE UPON THE FORTHCOMING POLITICAL PROCESS. ALIVE, THERE WAS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY (ALBEIT REMOTE) THAT HE WOULD TRY A COMEBACK BY UNIFYING THE LEFT OR, MORE LIKELY THROW HIS SUPPORT BEHIND A SUITABLE FRONT WITH UNKNOWN BUT PROBABLY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. HAVING LEFT THE SCENE, ON THE OTHER HAND, HE COULD WELL BECOME A FOLK HERO WHO VARIOUS POLITICAL GROUPS MAY TRY TO CAPTURE TO THEMSELVES; MRS. VELASCO, A STRONG AND INTELLIGENT WOMAN, PRESUMABLY WOULD HAVE A SAY IN THIS.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 LIMA 11129 272347Z

FINALLY THE MORALES BERMUDEZ GOVERNMENT HAS PROBABLY SUFFERED NOT FROM VELASCO'S DEATH PER SE, BUT FROM THE MEMORIES OF THE "UNFINISHED REVOLUTION" THAT HIS PASSING HAS EVOKED. AND, GIVEN PERU'S CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS, THERE IS LITTLE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT IN THE SHORT TERM THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT CAN DO MUCH TO IMPROVE ITS STANDING WITH THE GENERAL POPULACE.

7. SECRETARY'S NOTE OF CONDOLENCE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER (STATE 307337) DELIVERED ON RECEIPT DEC 27. AMBASSADOR HAS SENT PERSONAL CONDEOLENCES TO MRS. BELASCO.
SHLAUDEMAM

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESIDENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977LIMA11129
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770482-0683
Format: TEL
From: LIMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771216/aaaaamxj.tel
Line Count: 148
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0d5f0efd-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LIMA 11090
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 128058
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FORMER PRESIDENT VELASCO'S FUNERAL
TAGS: PINT, PE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0d5f0efd-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009